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The tumult and the shouting has died. Jerusalem at Christmas-time is, of course, full of pilgrims and tourists and the problem of accomodating them always strains the city's facilities. Many arrive in the Holy Land, as did the Holy Family in Bethlehem two thousand years ago, with no place to lay their heads. Hotels, pensions, convents and monasteries were booked up completely weeks before Christmas not only in Jerusalem, but in Ramallah, Jericho and other cities further afield. And still the crowds came. The American School in Jerusalem cannot legally compete with hotels and by preference we try to preserve our independence, sometimes jocularly called "academic calm". But in such time of crisis as Christmas and Easter, exceptions can be made and it seemed only fitting that we should make what facilities we had available to help solve the problem of the visitors. We therefore threw open our doors and our numbers swelled rapidly from the ten regular students and staff to a maximum of thirty-five on Christmas Day. Those of you who know the School can realize just what co-operation on the part of the servants and what ingenuity in providing beds and bedding were required to accomodate so many. Every nook and cranny was full. Excavation equipment such as camp beds and bedding, mattresses and pillows - the property of the American School or the property of the British School - were pressed into use. Because most of our visitors were Americans we had to provide lots of heat and hot water - luxuries which we at the School forego most of the time, not because of any Spartan streak in our make-up, but because of the expense involved. The Director's office became willy-nilly a sort of Information Desk and Travel Bureau. Students helped in every way possible to make the School's guests feel at home and to help them in their tours about the city and country-side.

Christmas dinner was a culinary triumph for the kitchen presided over by our inimitable Omar. He confided that he had been preparing for this for months. But our visitors' eyes popped, their salivary glands dripped, and their emotions often got the better of them when they saw the three turkeys, hot, brown and crisp, white potatoes, sweet candied yams, carrots, peas, cauliflower, three kinds of dressing (roast chestnut, oatmeal, rice and pine nuts), gravy, and the whole topped off with plum pudding brought to the table with Dickensian verve blazing with the blue flames of brandy, nuts and sweets, and white wine. A small pump organ had been borrowed from St. George's Cathedral and the whole group stood about it singing the old Christmas carols and hymns both before and after this mighty repast. On the night of the 23rd we had all put our names in a hat and then drawn. Each purchased for the person whose name he drew a small gift - value limited to 25 piastres - and put it on the tree which sparkled and shone from the side-board in the dining room. Neil Richardson - our only bearded inmate (albeit his beard has no affinities to that of Santa Claus) - acted as Santa Claus and distributed the presents. We all enjoyed ourselves immensely. I think our guests appreciated the homey atmosphere of the School and found here what they probably expected not to find in Jerusalem - a Christmas which approximated as closely as possible that which they would have had at home. To be a pilgrim and visit the holy shrines at such a season is a very fine and stirring experience, but this experience may have little or nothing in it of the emotions which one usually has at this season - sentiments and memories

built up over the years in circumstances far different from those met with in the Holy Land and yet, for many, the very essence of Christmas. Among these are the sense of being a member of a closely knit family or group, joining with others in well-known and traditional activities, giving and receiving, singing together and talking of past Christmases, sharing one's joys and sorrows. We at the School tried to provide the opportunity for such experience for our guests and ourselves and I think we succeeded. It was indeed a most Merry Christmas for us all.

The celebration of Christmas was in many ways the culmination of our School activities for the month of December. On Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, our School family participated singly or en masse in the activities of the various religious groups. We were celebrating the Protestant and Roman Catholic Christmas. The eastern churches do not celebrate until January 7th for they follow the old calendar. We joined with other Protestant groups in the traditional service conducted by the Lutherans and the Y.M.C.A. in the Shepherds' Field outside of Bethlehem. Here we sang hymns, listened to anthems of rejoicing, prayed together, listened to talks, and finally were guests at the supper held afterwards. To stand in a small group surrounded by darkness, on a rocky hillside with only the stars above us and to see the lights of Bethlehem in the distance as we sang "Oh Little Town of Bethlehem" or "Once in Royal David's City" - this was enough to kindle the duldest imagination. While the service was going on, sheep were being cooked in the large cave, and when the service was over we all received sandwiches made of roast sheep between large folded native Arab loaves of bread. This of course could hardly stay the appetite for the vigil ahead, so supplementary rations were provided in the form of box lunches sent by the School. Hot tea was provided from a large thermos container kindly given to the School some months ago by Dr. Moll, head of the Lutheran World Federation in Jerusalem.

The group drove back to Bethlehem and spent their time of waiting in wandering about the old streets, visiting the Church of the Nativity or wandering in and out of the bazaars buying souvenirs - or at least looking and pricing. At nine o'clock another traditional service was held. In the Crusader's Court, immediately to the south of the Church of the Nativity, the Protestant groups led by the choir, the Bishop and curate of St. George's Cathedral joined in carols, prayers and readings from the Bible. A stirring scene it was. On the platform was the choir and the leaders, but also two Greek priests who were our guests and were joining actively in our worship. The Bishop prayed in English and, for the large number of Arab Christians, in Arabic. One of the Greek priests brought us greetings in English from his patriarch, Timotheus, who has been too ill for some years to attend any public functions. Electric lights and candles shone down on the faces of the congregation standing bare-headed in the open air. It was a glorious night. The moon shone brightly and clouds sailed across the square of sky bounded by the ancient walls of the Church and the monasteries surrounding it. An old column, now supporting nothing but standing up starkly against the sky, pointed silently at a bright star in the skies over our heads. People turned their heads upwards to contemplate this marvellous brightness even as they sang the well-known carols. For all of us, this bright star - although actually the planet Jupiter - symbolized very realistically the Star of Bethlehem whose summons first brought the Wise Men and now brought us to this spot. After the service in the court, there were more hours to wait. Some of us were returning to Jerusalem to attend the midnight service in St. George's Cathedral, but most stayed on in Bethlehem to visit the Church of the Nativity and in particular the traditional grotto below its high altar. Many remained to witness the High Mass celebrated in the Church at midnight, but some of us returned to our beds.

So Christmas is past and peace - after another flurry - has descended upon the School. The other flurry was the preparation for the dig at Jericho, Miss Kenyon

and Miss Catleugh (who is to be our housekeeper at the dig) arrived by plane on the morning of the 24th and immediately began preparations. No time could be lost for the group from England was arriving on the 28th and the camp at Jericho must be ready for them or they would have no place to sleep. As all our spare beds, mattresses and blankets were in use already, we had to arrange for the truck to take down the equipment on the morning of the 28th. Bedding was taken off beds from which our departing guests had just arisen, and rushed off. Tents were brought out and inspected; others were borrowed from the Museum; equipment of all kinds was rounded up and checked. Miss Kenyon and I had conferences on finances, plans, arrangements on salaries for staff and use of the red car, and on the host of other details which must be attended to. Our experience last year stood us in good stead however and matters proceeded smoothly. The dig is hardly yet started for there is always the settling down in the dig house, the erection of tents, the cleaning up of the tell, the preparation of equipment and all the thousand and one details of a large-scale excavation to attend to. Mr. Richardson went down on Sunday with Miss Kenyon but the rest of us will not go until tomorrow - New Year's Day. End of the month business at School and another matter which I have not yet mentioned prevent me from going down earlier.

The other matter is one which in my personal December experience, I rate first. Simply and plainly it is the arrival of a son in the Tushingham family. Ian Douglas was born in the Augusta Victoria Hospital on the Mount of Olives on December 9th and has kept us all extremely busy ever since. For his size he has assumed a disproportionate place in our lives, and we are extremely conscious of his presence 24 hours a day. Both he and his mother are very well. That he may well turn out to be an archaeologist is hinted by a factor commented upon by one of his early visitors - namely, that his face bore a strong resemblance to a Byzantine red, ribbed cooking-pot. This perhaps unnecessarily frank remark is no longer justified, I am happy to say, at least insofar as colour is concerned. Needless to say he has wreaked havoc with our business organization at the School. My wife is book-keeper and secretary, and as a result of her incapacitation, this job devolved upon me. I am afraid that I was not very efficient over the Christmas rush on an average of three or four hours sleep a night, but we got over it some way. Fortunately my wife's mother, Mrs. Thomson, came out to visit us, bringing our little daughter with her. She stayed for the big event and is still with us. Without her, I am afraid that my presence at the dig in Jericho would be sporadic. But with her, I can go down to work with no fear of what may be transpiring in Jerusalem, and we can get our business done on week-ends.

In the early part of December, most of our students took time off for trips to Egypt. In the ten days to two weeks they were away they seem to have covered the high spots very well. Some of them had the privilege of staying at Chicago House at Luxor. Having been a guest of Dr. and Mrs. Hughes in this beautiful expedition house two years ago, and knowing their courtesy and helpfulness, I can appreciate how much our group enjoyed their stay there. I take this opportunity of thanking the Oriental Institute and especially George Hughes for his kindness to our students. In their absence, I continued to busy myself with the Dhiban materials, and I am happy to say that I now have the bulk of the material in hand. It is by no means ready for publication but the dating of levels and building remains in the various sites on the tell is quite certain on the basis of comparative material from other excavations. We can now go ahead with confidence in the spring, knowing exactly where we stand. Now the time has come to abandon the Late Byzantine and Arab materials of Dhiban and tackle the Iron Age type ~~xx~~ series of Jericho, not to speak of the Early Bronze and Chalcolithic materials which will be turning up in Site E at Tell es-Sultan.

In preparation for work at Jericho we had two lectures on pottery - with emphasis on Neolithic, Early Bronze and Middle Bronze materials - in the study galleries at the Palestine Archaeological Museum. Again I was struck by the marvellous



facilities

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of this Museum for such study, facilities which are approached nowhere else in the world, providing materials of all periods from all sites which can be handled and examined carefully, a provision which is absolutely necessary for the close study of pottery and which is defeated in most museums by the insistence that materials remain under glass.

There have been many unofficial School trips during the month. Mr. Andry has frequently taken a party in his own car when for some reason the School cars or driver were unavailable. One day it may be a trip to Herodium, the great fortress where Herod the Great was buried. Or it may be the ruined site of Ai. Yesterday, a group set off for a trip down the Wadi Qelt, not only to see the ancient Roman road from Jericho to Jerusalem but also to view the scenic grandeur of the wadi itself and the beautifully situated monastery of St. George, perched on the sheer face of the cliff overlooking the valley. A trip to Jifna to purchase an ossuary for the University of Chicago New Testament Department Museum was the excuse for a flying trip to Samaria, Shechem and Mt. Gerizim for those who had not already seen these sites. Our main purpose was well served by the fact that we found and purchased a good ossuary with an inscription "Yo'ezer, son of Yehohanan, the scribe". Now the only problem is to obtain permission from the Department of Antiquities to send it out of the country and to convey it safely to Chicago. I hope that Harold Willoughby will be pleased with his new acquisition.

Those of you who have read his articles on his beloved Shiloh or have met him wandering about the streets of Jerusalem will remember Dr. Aage Schmidt. I am sorry to have to report that he died two days ago in the Augusta Victoria Hospital and was buried this morning in the Lutheran Cemetery in Bethlehem. The Holy Land was his home by choice and in spite of many urgings to return home to his family where he would be properly cared for, he preferred to remain here. I am sure that it was his wish to die here in the land where he had worked and studied so long and which he loved so much. We shall all miss his familiar figure moving about the streets or poring over books in our library.

With the coming exodus of our whole student body to Jericho, the School will be a very quiet place. All of us, Mr. and Mrs. Fisher and son Wilkin, Mr. Andry, Mr. Warren, Mr. Broome, Mr. Richardson and myself, will be down there tomorrow, hard at work and doing our best to elucidate some of the mysteries which the marvellous old mound of Tell es-Sultan still has hidden in its somewhat scarred and battered bosom. I hope that it will be possible to give you some news of the excavations in my next letter.

This is the last day of 1952 and a marvellous year it has been for myself and family. The privilege and delight of working and living in Jerusalem is something which I had never dared to contemplate. Yet it is nearly two years since I arrived here and my enthusiasm for the work and my love of this city is unabated. To all of you who made this experience possible, and to those who by their friendship over these years have helped to make my stay here so happy, I want to offer my sincere gratitude. And to all of you who read this newsletter I wish to take this opportunity of conveying, on behalf of the School and my own family, our sincere wishes for a most prosperous and enjoyable 1953.

A.D. Tushingham, Director.